Morris county N-Jersey

William Coates
To

Boonton March 2d 1850

GARRISON
MSS.

Dear Friend Garrison

I wrote to Robt wollcott some time since a brief history of the reform movements in this villiage - for the information of Reform Lecturers - but perhaps it has got mislaid - as it has not found a place in the Liberator I hope you will insert this in your valuable Journal - as ~~[illegible]~~ this villiage to be unnoticed by all the advocates of the rights of man - I hereby give a cordial invitation - in the name of many lovers of the race - in this place - to all those who may be disposed to pay us a visit - the coming spring & summer - as we cannot have a house in the winter winter - Except - a school house - that would only seat 80 or 90 people - we have three churches in the place - but they are all closed against us - we could get the previledge of the rolling mill - if the wether is not cold - any time - we should love to have Henery C Wright - come here among us, I got acquainted with him through the letters of his - in Joseph Barkers christian - and I hereby invite Joseph Barker - to come & help us - when he again touches our shores - if this should meet his sight - he I think - is one of the noblest specimens of humanity that this age can boast of - we have all his writings up to aprile 1848 - & they are truly Grand - he has been a saviour from false Orthodoxy to not a few in this place - and he is (such) a heart scold - to the Hireling priests of Boonton - as the overwhelming truth of his doctrines is opening the eyes of the people for these three years past - that their flocks is likely to be thinned thereby - I wrote to his Brother

Samuel- in the state of Ohio- when he was here in this country + but got no answer- we will pay all the expence he incurrs by going out of his way to visit us- if he will have the kindness to come and take his own part on the side of truth- I should think that if H- C- Wright- or C- C- Burleigh- were to visit us- they might wake up a sympathy- for the several reforms they advocate- that could only be deadened by the ennunciation of higher forms of truth & goodness- as there are many here that are in full sympathy with them- to give you a specimen of what the legitimate- effects of Bigotry superstition & intolerance- by the (so called) cristians in Boonton can do- ~~last night~~ three months ago or thereabouts they got a pastor on trial- of the name of Robert Gray at the (free church)- & he having heard so much talk of the (oberlin school) (infidelity) of we come outers- that he wished to come to our meetings- to hear & see for himself- & his soul being of the right mould- he came- & acted like a Brother- this the church took ofence at- & he told them in his sermon- that they were reviling men- that were among the best friends of humanity- well in his absence they called a church meeting- to have him tried & ordained- although he told them he did not recognize the right of any (man)- to say whither he should preach or not- suffice it to say they choose a counsel- of three (priests) tried him- and he was found wanting- in a sincere belief of a personal Devil- a local Hell- & Eternal life in torments- a Due regard for the sabbath- as he would think it no harm to shingle his house on that day- if his health required it- he was condemned in short never to wag his head in that pulpit again- he has been preaching every Sunday- since in the school house- to all that will come & hear him- & recognizes every mans-

right to ask questions—or speak his thoughts
in the meeting—he is in fact such a men—as the
World have need of—he works at his trade through
the week—in his own hired house—like Paul and
Barnabas— while in the church—he & others got
up a weekly Temperance meeting—which has been
conducted weekly ever since—we got together to
draw up a constitution—for the society—formed
a committe of the whole—for that purpose—only a few
attended—& their was nothing farther done—we had
previous to this—adopted a resolution—as the
bases—that acknowledged all who came to the
meeting as Members—& Brothers—who had a perfect
right to talk temperance in their own way—
without being frowned down—as Fanatics or mad-
-men—well this was reconsidered the next evening—
and adopted—the next meeting we appointed a
committe of six—to draw up a constitution—and
instead of their doing it in accordence with the
spirit of the resolution—they reported a majority
in favour of the constitution of the secret Order
of the (Sons of Temperance)—as the result of their
Deliberations—this called up a discussion warm &
Effective—& at the close some of the opposition got
wrothy—hard names—from some of the church
members— we adjourned for a week & met in
the evening following—the house was crowded many
of the Secret Order of Sons—had got wind of the
move—& were in attendance from Rockaway—to spout
in their own cause—the ~~debate~~ meeting was organized and
opened with (prayer) to the Orthodox—God—to
preside over the meeting—& truly if you had
seen their demonstrations—you would have been
convinced of his changeableness if you never were
before—that is to say if he did as the priest desired
him— well the discussion was commenced by one
in favor of the (secret order)—who had prepared a
written speech—a motion had been made and
carried to limit the speakers to 10 minutes—

this motion was recinded to allow the first speaker
an opportunity to finish his written Document
I next took the floor & having refuted some
personal Remarks by the last speaker & had
commenced to read some Extracts from their by Laws
when the time was announced to be up — a motion
was made to suspend the 10 minutes rule in my
favor but I was anxious all should be heard —
I Refused the priveledge — next a son of Temperance
rose & when the chairman called times up — a
motion was made & carried for 10 minutes more
at the expiration of which 10 minutes more was
called for — then a motion was made to recind the
rule altogether — at this juncture a Leading (Deacon
of the Church) made a motion to adjourn (Sine Die)
it was carried amid the Greatest tumult immagina-
with cries from the (Deacon) of its infidelity against
the Bible — Open the Door & let the people go
then he commenced thundering at me that I
was an infidel & did not believe the Bible —
that the Sons of Temperance although he
was opposed to them — they were better than
me — then a son of temperance a stranger in
the place wished to speak to the people on
Temperance & was permitted — now amid all
this outrage on decency & justice — not one of the
three (Hireling Priests) that was present & witnessed
the whole proceedings had ~~not~~ the manliness to
stand up & rebuke this intolerance — fully
verefying the say of Jesus — the Hireling fleeth
because he is an Hireling — well a new chairman
was appointed & a meeting organized to Discuss the
Question — I wanna see come what will o me —
one of the (priests) rose & said this was the
house of Prayer & he hoped they would be
calm — but instead of it being the house of
prayer it was more like a den of (thieves) after
several short speeches the meeting adjourned till
Monday —